A sum of Rs. 41.09 crores was spent for developing container handling facilities at Madras, Cochin, Calcutta and Haldua ports during the Sixth Five yea$_r$ Plan. At Bombay port, a su$_m$ of Rs. 27.27 crores was spent upto the end of VI Plan. Provision of Rs. 59.92 crores has been made for development of container handling facilities at existing major container handling ports during the VII Plan. A sum of Rs. 2.26 crores has also been spent on the establishment of Inland Container Depots (ICDs) at Bangalore, New Delhi, Gantur, Gauhati, Anaparty and Coimbatore. An amount of Rs. 5.14, crores is proposed to be spent for further development of ICDs at Bangalore (Whitefield) and Delhi (Tughlakabad).

Container carrying vessels are calling at major ports in India, providing sailings from and to a large number of countries. Shipping Corporation of India has also established container services for Europe, USA-Atlantic ports, East Coast of Canada and Australia. SCI proposes development of container services for Black Sea ports in USSR and to Far East.

At present, 20 per cent of the total general cargo handled at ports in India is containerised.

A large number of agencies are involved in container operations. The main agencies involved in container operations are ports, shipping lines, Railways and Customs, coordination between these ageneies being done by Ministry of Commerce.

Disposal of income tax anti central excise cases

*136. PROF. C. 'LAKSHMANNA: Will the Ministe'r of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) what is the number of appeal cases relating to income-tax and central excise which are pending more than a year and what are the reasons the'refor; and

(b) what measures are being taken by Government fo$_r$ the expeditious disposal of the pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) It is presumed that the Hon'ble Member has in mind the appeal cases pending in the Courts for mote than one year.

The number of such appeals relating to income-tax and central excise are given below:

Income-Tax—Supreme Court- 2248 cases
High Courts- 22472 cases Central
Excise:— Supreme Court- 2000 casis
H:gh Courts- 5600 cas: s

The main reasons for the pendency of these cases are legal and procedural delays.

(b) The income-tax and central excise officials have been instructed to pursue the cases vigorously in the courts.

Interim relief for working journalists

*137. SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT:
SHRI CHITTA BASU:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision regarding the grant of intetom relief to working journalists and non-journalists;

(b) if so,' what are the details thereof; and

(c) if no decision has been taken so far, what are the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (c) The recommendations of the Wage Boards for Working Journalists and Non-Journalists Staff constituted by the Government Of India in July, 1985 under the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Condi* tions of Service) and Miscellaneous

Provisions Act, 1955 in* regard to interim rates of wages are still awaited. As soon as the recommendations are received, they will be considered by Government under Section 13A of the Act. Government have already requested the Wage Boards to expedite their recommendations.

Payments to workers of Rohtas Industries Limited, Dalmia Nagar

•138. SHRI RAMANAND YADAV: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that M/s. Rohtas Industries Limited, Dalmia Nagar has not so far paid the salaries and wages due to their 15000 workers from May, 1984;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Supreme Court has directed the management of the company to pay the salaries and dues to the workers; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose *to* take to see that the directives of the Supreme Court are complied with without any delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes. Sir. According to information received from the Government of Bihar, Management of M|s. Rohtas Industries Limited. Dalmia Nagar has not paid wages to workers from May, 1984.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. In its order dated the 5-2-1986, the Supreme Court has directed the Management to pay all salaries and wages due to workers from May, 1984 in three instalments, the first before March 15. 1986, the second before May 15, 1986 and the third before July 15, 1986. According to information received from the Government of Bihar, the Management has been directed to make the payment as per the directive of the Supreme Court. The Chief Inspector of Factories has been asked to supervise the payment and send weekly reports regarding progress in making payments.

Import of natural and synthetic rubber

♦139. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: SHRI L. GANESAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state;

(a) what are the reasons for im porting! synthetic and {natural rub ber into the country during the last three years, yearwise;

(b) what was the estimated demand for rubber during the above period in the country;

(c) what was the production of rubber during the above period;

(d) what was the comparative shortfall during the said -period, year-wise; and

(e) whether any memorandum ha$_s$ been received by Government against the import of rubber?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER); (a) to (d) Imports of natural and synthe-